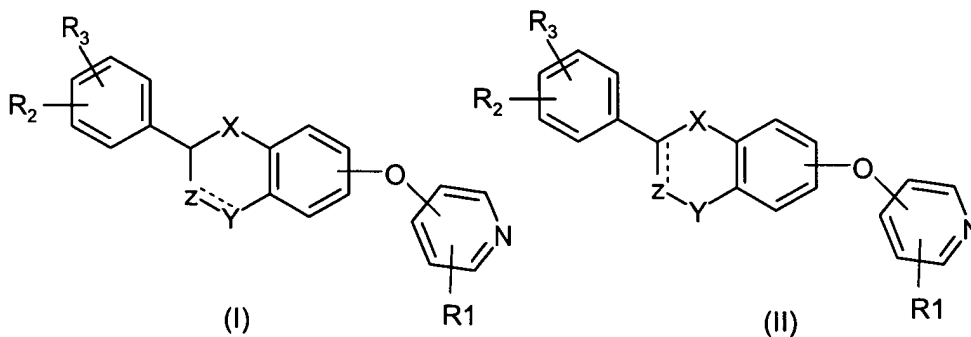


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A compound of formula (I) or (II):



wherein

X is -O-, -CH₂- or -C(O)-;

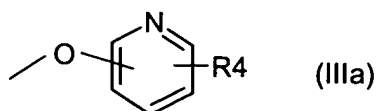
Z is -CHR₁₂- or valence bond;

Y is -CH₂-, -C(O)-, CH(OR₁₃)-, -O-, -S-;

provided that in case Z is a valence bond, Y is not C(O);

the dashed line represents an optional double bond in which case Z is -CR₁₂- and Y is -CH₂-, -C(O)- or CH(OR₁₀)- (in formula II) or -CH- (in formula I);

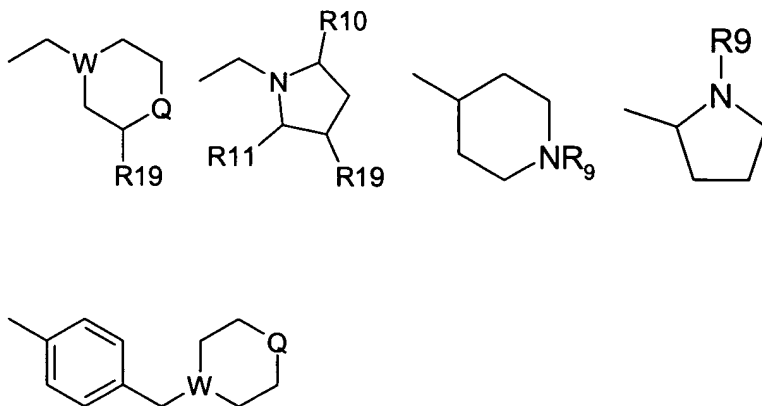
R₂ and R₃ are independently H, lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, -NO₂, halogen, -CF₃, -OH, benzyloxy or a group of formula (IIIa)



R_1 is H, CN, halogen, $-\text{CONH}_2$, $-\text{COOR}_{15}$, $-\text{CH}_2\text{NR}_{15}\text{R}_{18}$, NHC(O)R_5 , NHCH_2R_5 , NHR_{20} , $\text{NR}_{21}\text{R}_{22}$, NHC(NH)NHCH_3 or, in case the compound is of formula (II) wherein the optional double bond exists or in case R_2 or R_3 is benzyloxy or a group of formula (IIIa) or in case the pyridine ring of formula (I) or (II) is attached to the oxygen atom in 3, 4 or 5 position, R_1 can also be $-\text{NO}_2$ or $\text{NR}_{16}\text{R}_{17}$;

R_4 is H, $-\text{NO}_2$, CN, halogen, $-\text{CONH}_2$, $-\text{COOR}_{15}$, $-\text{CH}_2\text{NR}_{15}\text{R}_{18}$, $-\text{NR}_{16}\text{R}_{17}$, $-\text{NHC(O)R}_5$ or $-\text{NHC(NH)NHCH}_3$;

R_5 is alkyl substituted with 1-3 substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, amino and hydroxy, or carboxyalkyl, in which the alkyl portion is optionally substituted with 1-3 substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, amino and hydroxyl, $-\text{CHR}_6\text{NR}_7\text{R}_8$ or one of the following groups:



W is N or CH;

Q is CHR_{14} , NR_9 , S or O;

R_6 is H or lower alkyl;

R_7 and R_8 are independently H, acyl, lower alkyl or lower hydroxyalkyl;

R_9 is H, lower alkyl or phenyl;

R_{10} and R_{11} are independently H or lower alkyl;

R_{12} is H or lower alkyl;

R_{13} is H, alkylsulfonyl or acyl;

R_{14} is H, -OH, -COOR₁₅;

R_{15} is H or lower alkyl;

R_{16} and R_{17} are independently H, acyl, alkylsulfonyl, -C(S)NHR₁₈ or
-C(O)NHR₁₈;

R_{18} is H or lower alkyl;

R_{19} is H or -OH;

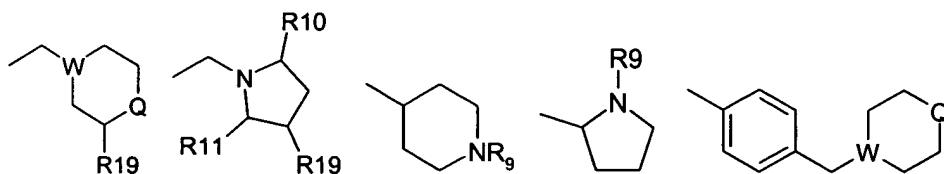
R_{20} is a pyridinyl group optionally substituted with a -NO₂ group;

R_{21} and R_{22} are lower alkyl;

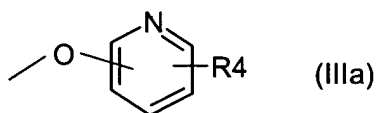
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or ester thereof.

2. (Original) A compound according to claim 1 wherein R_1 is -NHC(O)R₅, X is O,
Y is CH₂ and Z is CHR₁₂.

3. (Original) A compound according to claim 2 wherein Z is CH₂ and R₅ is alkyl
substituted with 1-3 substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, amino
and hydroxy, or carboxyalkyl, in which the alkyl portion is optionally substituted with 1-3
substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, amino and hydroxyl,
-CHR₆NR₇R₈ or one of the following groups:



4. (Original) A compound according to claim 1 wherein R_2 or R_3 is a benzyloxy or a group of formula (IIIa)



5. (Original) A compound according to claim 4 wherein R_4 is NO₂.

6. (Currently Amended) A compound according to claim 4 wherein R_1 is NO₂.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Original) A method for inhibiting Na⁺/Ca²⁺ exchange mechanism in a cell, comprising administering to a subject in need thereof a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 1.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (New) A compound according to claim 5 wherein R_1 is NO₂.